



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Medford District Office  
3040 Biddle Road  
Medford, Oregon 97504



IN REPLY REFER TO:

1782(116)  
Pilot Rock Exchange EA  
Draft FONSI  
A3651(WHY:cn)

**DEC 16 1999**

Dear Interested Public:

The Pilot Rock Exchange Environmental Assessment is being advertised in the Medford Mail Tribune for a 15 day public review period. Attached is the Pilot Rock Exchange Environmental Assessment with a "DRAFT" Finding of No Significant Impact.

The primary purpose of a public review is to allow the public an opportunity to comment on the agency's determination that there are no significant impacts associated with the proposed action and, therefore, an Environmental Impact Statement is not necessary.

All comments should be made in writing and mailed to Bill Yocum, Ashland Resource Area, 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504. Any questions should be directed to Bill at (541)770-2384.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Drehobl  
Field Manager  
Ashland Resource Area

Enclosures(as stated)

AUDUBON SOCIETY  
P.O. BOX 8597  
MEDFORD, OREGON 97504

KLAMATH SISKIYOU WILDLANDS CENTER  
P.O. BOX 332  
WILLIAMS, OREGON 97544

HEADWATERS  
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ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

ATTN. MICHAEL MASON  
THE CONFEDERATED TRIBES  
9615 GRAND RONDE ROAD  
GRAND RONDE, OREGON 97347

FRIENDS OF THE GREENSPRINGS  
15097 HIGHWAY 66  
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

ATTN.: WENDELL WOOD  
OREGON NATURAL RESOURCE COUNCIL  
943 LAKESHORE DRIVE  
KLAMATH FALLS, OREGON 97601

THE PACIFIC RIVERS COUNCIL  
P.O. BOX 10798  
EUGENE, OREGON 97440

ATTN. MYRA ERWIN  
ROGUE GROUP OF SIERRA CLUB  
300 GRANDVIEW  
ASHLAND, OREGON 97520

ROCKY McVAY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
ASSOCIATION OF O&C COUNTIES  
P.O. BOX 2327  
HARBOR, OREGON 97415

ATTN: CHUCK FUSTISH  
OREGON DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE  
ROGUE DISTRICT OFFICE  
1495 EAST GREGORY ROAD  
CENTRAL POINT, OREGON 97502

ATTN: DAN THORPE  
DEPARTMENT OF STATE FORESTRY  
5286 TABLE ROCK ROAD  
CENTRAL POINT, OREGON 97502

DAVE WILLIS, SODA MT. WILDERNESS  
COUNCIL  
15187 HIGHWAY 66  
ASHLAND, OR 97520

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
for  
OR-110-98-32

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

The Bureau of Land Management's Medford District has analyzed a proposal for a land exchange in the Ashland Resource Area. Design features and analysis of this proposal are discussed and supported in the *Medford District RECORD OF DECISION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN* of June 1995.

The proposed action and project design features are further described in the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) # OR-110-98-32. This FONSI and attached EA are tiered with the *Medford District RECORD OF DECISION AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN* of June 1995. All documents may be reviewed at the Medford District Office.

The proposed land exchange is located in the Medford District, Bureau of Land Management. The proposed action is not considered to be precedent setting and is considered to be an acceptable action in implementing the ROD.

There are no floodplains, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, known hazardous waste areas, areas of Native American religious concern, prime nor unique farmlands within the project area. The project area does not qualify for potential wilderness designation. This project will compliment the values in the Pilot Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern. No adverse significant impact is anticipated to fisheries, air quality, lands, and minerals. No threatened or endangered plants or cultural or paleontological resources were observed in the area. Should threatened or endangered plants or cultural or paleontological resources be discovered they would be protected.

The estimation of impacts was based on research, professional judgement, and the experience of the interdisciplinary team. This method of estimating effects on the environment reduces the uncertainties to a level which does not involve highly unknown or unique risks. The design features identified in the attached EA would assure that no significant site specific nor cumulative impacts would occur to the human environment other than those already addressed in the Medford District Resource Management Plan /EIS.

FONSI Determination

On the basis of the information contained in the EA and all other information available to me as is summarized and above, it is my determination that none of the alternatives analyzed constitute a significant impact affecting the quality of the human environment greater than those addressed in the Medford District Resource Management Plan /EIS. Therefore, a new EIS or a supplement to the existing EIS is unnecessary and would not be prepared.

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Ashland Field Manager

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Date

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
MEDFORD DISTRICT  
ASHLAND RESOURCE AREA

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

FOR

Pilot Rock Exchange OR-110-98-32

**UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
MEDFORD DISTRICT**

**EA Cover Sheet**

Resource Area: Ashland OR-110-98-32

Action/Title: Pilot Rock Exchange

Location: T. 34S., R. 4W., Sec. 22, 28

List of Preparers

Bob Bessey - Fisheries

George Arnold - Wildlife

Diane Parry - Minerals

Joan Seevers - T & E Plants

Fred Tomlins - Cultural

Loren Wittenberg - Soils Geology

Jan Miller - Realty

Format/Adequacy Jan Miller & Bill Yocum

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Purpose and Need for the Proposed Action

The need for this EA is to analyze a proposed land exchange between the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Boise Cascade Corporation (BCC). The proposed action is described below in Section II. The exchange would benefit the BLM by blocking up public ownership in the Pilot Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) and along Lewis Creek north of Shady Cove.

### B. Conformance with Land Use Plan

The proposed exchange is in conformance with the Record of Decision for the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP) dated June 1995.

### C. Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans

Authority for the Exchange is Section 206 of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1716). All of the tracts (both private and federal) are located within Jackson County. The action (land exchange) is not specifically addressed in the County's land use plan but is consistent with the objectives of the plan.

Since the Jackson County Comprehensive plan has been acknowledged by the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development as meeting statewide planning goals and procedures, it is assumed that the proposed action is also in conformance with applicable State agency plans, programs, and policies. In any event, the new owner(s) would be constrained by county plans and ordinances as well as state laws and rules.

The anticipated "reasonable and foreseeable" impacts of the public land coming into the private ownership are addressed in the Environmental Consequences section (IV). The exchange is not expected to result in any land uses which are not consistent with the Jackson County Land Use Ordinance or with current uses occurring on the nearby private lands.

### D. Hazardous Materials Investigation

A thorough search of available records, including BLM, federal and state lists of potential sites, BLM land status records (Historical Index/Master Title Plat), mining claim records, and case records was conducted and did not reveal any potential for contamination by hazardous materials on any of the offered or selected lands. In addition, a physical inspection of all tracts was conducted and no evidence was observed on the ground.

## II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES

### A. Proposed Action

The proposed action is the exchange of 282 acres of private (hereinafter called “offered”) land described as follows:

T. 33S., R. 1W., Section 22, W1/2NE1/4, SE1/4NW1/4;  
T. 41S., R. 2E., Section 2, N1/2NW1/4, SE1/4NW1/4, NE1/4SW1/4;

for not to exceed 280.00 acres of public (hereinafter called “selected”) land described as follows:

T. 33S., R. 4W., Section 22, NE1/4NE1/4SE1/4; Section 28, SE1/4NE1/4, NE1/4SE1/4.

As required by Bureau regulation, the exchange values shall be fair market value as determined by appraisal. In the event the appraised values are not equal, the exchange values shall be equalized by cash payment not to exceed twenty-five percent (25%) of the value of the federal lands or by deleting a parcel or parcels or a combination of both.

### B. Management Plans

One offered parcel is located in the Cascade/Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area (CSEEA) identified in the Medford District Resource Management Plan (RMP). It is also adjacent to the Pilot Rock ACEC. As such, future management would be consistent with the actions identified in that plan. No timber harvest would be permitted, it would be closed to Off Road Vehicle Use, Mineral Leasing would be subject to a no surface occupancy stipulation, and grazing would be allowed per current regulations. The second parcel adjoins a larger block of public lands in the headwaters of Lewis Creek.

The selected parcels are identified as Zone 2 lands in the RMP. That is, they are suitable for exchange to block up or acquire Zone 1 lands (Retention Areas) that have significant resource values.

### C. Alternatives

The only alternative considered is no action which would be to not proceed with the exchange. The existing pattern of land ownership would remain unchanged.

## III. AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

#### A. General Setting

All parcels are located in Jackson County.

#### B. Affected Resources/Land Classification/ Existing Rights.

The following is a summary of the affected resources for both the offered and selected lands.

One offered parcel (162 acres) is located approximately 13 miles southeast of Ashland, Oregon and lies at an elevation between 4,600 and 5,200 feet. The tract is completely surrounded by public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and is legally and physically accessible by the public. It adjoins the Pilot Rock Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) to the north and east. That area was designated to protect the cultural and historical values, fossil beds, and special status plants and animals. The offered parcel has many of the same resource values and is also traversed by the Pacific Crest Trail. The second parcel (120 acres) is located approximately 6 miles north of Shady Cove and lies at an elevation of 2500 feet.

##### Timber

Approximately one half of the Pilot Rock parcel is considered commercial timber. The remainder is a mix of grassland, shrub/brush land, and rock outcrops on the flank of Pilot Rock. There is approximately 1.2 MMBF of timber consisting primarily of Douglas-fir, white fir, incense cedar, and scattered sugar pine. The Lewis Creek parcel has 62 acres of timberlands with approximately 485 MBF of timber. It is primarily Douglas Fir and Ponderosa Pine. The remaining acreage is grasslands, shrubs and brush.

##### Minerals

No mineral leases or permits have been issued by Boise Cascade. The parcels are rated as moderate potential for locatable, leasable, and saleable minerals.

##### Grazing

The Pilot Rock parcel is included in an area covered by BLM's Soda Mountain allotment. Boise leases the grazing rights to Bob Miller. There is no grazing in the Lewis Creek area.

##### Agreements and Permits

Both parcels are included in Reciprocal Road Use Permit Agreement M-660 with Boise. A portion of Road No. 40-2E-33 was constructed under this agreement. A nonexclusive perpetual easement for the Pacific Crest Trail was granted to the BLM in 1976.



### Wildlife

No wildlife species listed (or candidates for listing) as threatened or endangered under the auspices of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, are known to be present on the offered lands. Also, the lands are not in critical habitat for listed species.

The offered lands have not been systematically surveyed for northern spotted owls. Portions of the lands, however, were surveyed in 1989 and 1994 coincidentally with the survey of adjacent BLM lands. There were no spotted owl detections. The land provides 17 acres of suitable northern spotted owl habitat and 26 acres of dispersal-only habitat.

The eastern half of Pilot Rock is part of the offered land. Given the presence of certain characteristics, (e.g., ledges and cracks) rock faces such as Pilot Rock provide unique habitat for some species, including nesting habitat (ledges) for peregrine falcons, a federally-listed endangered species. In 1987, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife rated Pilot Rock as having no value/potential as peregrine nesting habitat. Based on their summary, the rating was due to the lack of ledges and considerable use by recreationists. However, peregrines reportedly nested on Pilot Rock sometime in the 1960's (Joel Pagel 1998, personal communication). Available BLM information does not indicate any recent presence of peregrine falcons.

No streams in the Pilot Rock parcel contain fish habitat. Small streams near the Siskiyou Crest drain toward Emigrant Creek in the Rogue basin, as well as to the south toward Scotch Creek in the Klamath basin. Lewis Creek Provides fish habitat however, no stream surveys have been conducted.

### Floodplains/Wetlands/Wild and Scenic Rivers/Prime or Unique Farmlands

None.

### Cultural/Historic

Pilot Rock was a guide to the Siskiyou Pass on the Oregon California Trail. The Shasta Tribe has indicated concern for cultural values in the immediate area. This concern is based upon the presence of archaeological sites, burials, and present day ceremonial services. The Lewis Creek parcel has no cultural values.

### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)

Five hundred and forty (540) acres of the adjoining public land in the Pilot Rock area has been designated as an ACEC based upon the unique geological formation, fossil beds, wildflower meadows, and special status plants and animals.

### County Zoning

Jackson County has the parcel zoned as FR-160. This is the designation for prime forest land.

The two selected parcels are located approximately 10 miles north of Wimer, Oregon and lie at an elevation between 3,200 and 4,400 feet. Both parcels are physically accessible to the public. As the road system in this area was built under terms and conditions of Reciprocal Agreements over the adjoining private land, the public has no legal rights to use the roads. As a practical matter, however, the public has full use of roads in this area.

### Timber

The selected parcels are located in the Northern General Forest Management Area and are included in the commercial timber base. The species composition is primarily Douglas-fir with minor amounts of incense cedar, ponderosa pine, and sugar pine. Timber has been harvested from both parcels in the past. Approximately 2.26 MMBF of commercial timber remains on eighty-five (85) acres.

### Minerals

There has been no mineral activity on the selected parcels. Both are rated as low potential for locatable, leasable, and saleable minerals.

### Grazing

There are no grazing leases on the parcels.

### Agreements and Permits

The NE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>SE<sup>1</sup>/<sub>4</sub>, Section 22 is included in the M-800 Agreement with what was formerly Medco. The remainder of the parcels are included in the M-660 or the M-887A Agreements with Boise Cascade.

### Wildlife

No wildlife species listed (or candidates for listing) as threatened or endangered under the auspices of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, are known to be present on the selected lands. Also, the lands are not in critical habitat for the listed species.

Northern spotted owl surveys were conducted on all or portions of the selected lands in 1988, 1989, 1994, and 1995. There was one night detection near Section 22 in 1989, but owls were not found during subsequent follow-up visits.

Approximately 94 acres provide habitat for northern spotted owls, of which 47 acres are suitable habitat (nesting, roosting or foraging habitat) and 47 acres of habitat that provide only dispersal function.

No streams in the parcels contain fish habitat. However, perennial and intermittent streams that flow through or originate within parcels are relatively close (less than 0.5) to Grave Creek, a stream that provides habitat for coho salmon (listed as Threatened under the ESA), steelhead and cutthroat trout (candidate species). The State has classified Grave Creek as a “High Value” steelhead stream. Additionally, Grave Creek is a State DEQ water quality limited stream for temperature.

#### Scenic Values

The area has been designated class IV for visual resources. The objectives for this class are to manage for moderate levels of change to the characteristic landscape. Activities may dominate the view and may be the major focus of viewer attention.

#### Floodplains/Wetlands/Wild and Scenic Rivers/Prime or Unique Farmlands

None.

#### Cultural/Historic

None.

#### Areas of Critical Environmental Concern

None.

#### County Zoning

Jackson County has both parcels zoned as FR-160. This is the designation for prime forest land.

### IV. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

#### A. Impacts of the Proposed Action

Acquisition of the offered parcels will block up public land in the Lewis Creek area and Cascade/Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area (CSEEA) and protect the geological, historical, cultural, and recreational values of the Pilot Rock ACEC.

The land exchange would result in the loss of approximately 94 acres of northern spotted owl habitat (47 acres of suitable habitat and 47 acres of dispersal habitat) on lands presently managed by BLM, and the acquisition of approximately 43 acres of northern spotted owl habitat (17 acres of suitable habitat and 26 acres of dispersal habitat) from lands presently owned by BCC.

For purposes of analysis, it can be assumed the presently existing northern spotted owl habitat on the selected lands will be harvested at some time regardless of ownership. The

selected lands are in the matrix land allocation described in the Northwest Forest Plan, and under the plan the bulk of timber harvested from BLM administered lands is to come from this allocation. BCC is a wood products company that is likely to harvest timber from these lands.

In contrast, the fate of the northern spotted habitat on the offered land is likely to differ under the proposed land exchange. If retained in BCC ownership, the habitat will likely be harvested. Under BLM management, however, the habitat will be retained because it will be included in the Pilot Rock ACEC.

Because the proposed land exchange will result in the loss of northern spotted owl habitat on federal land, a likely to adversely affect, formal consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is required. Land exchanges were programmatically consulted on in 1996, and this exchange meets the parameters of that consultation.

Riparian and stream habitat conditions in the selected parcels are currently below optimum because of logging prior to implementation of the Northwest Forest Plan. These habitats would never recover to conditions that meet Aquatic Conservation Strategy objectives once ownership passes from BLM to private industry if current riparian reserves are logged to meet minimum requirements of the State Forest Practice Rules. According to the State Department of Environmental Quality and the US Environmental Protection Agency, current state forest practice rules are inadequate to maintain cool stream temperatures, minimize sediment movement to streams and to ensure an adequate long-term input of large woody reserve that would be managed under the Northwest Forest Plan, as there is an estimated 3.0 miles of stream in the selected parcels and 1.2 miles in the offered parcel. Most logging on selected parcels would probably continue to be with cable systems, rather than crawler tractor, because selected lands already contain a dense road network. Sediment generated from logging should therefore be minimal if road surfacing and drainage is adequately maintained for use during the wet season.

Riparian and stream habitat condition in the offered parcel have not been affected by land management activities and would probably remain in good condition following transfer of ownership because there would be no timber harvest in the Cascade/Siskiyou Ecological Emphasis Area. Blocking up BLM lands in the Ecological Emphasis Area would help maintain water quality for cutthroat trout (candidate species) in upper Emigrant Creek and in Scotch Creek, a Klamath River tributary.